

# **Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority**



## **Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority**

**Presented to the  
State Records Commission  
November 5, 2008**

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# **Functional and Organizational Analysis of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority**

## **Sources of Information**

- Representatives of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority
- Code of Alabama 1975 § 9-1A-1 through § 9-10A-22
- Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority Audit Report
- Alabama Government Manual (2006), p. 568
- Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority Website
- Alabama Clean Water Partnership Website
- Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority Publications

## **Historical Context**

In January 1989, a group of interested citizens concerned with developing the natural resources of the Choctawhatchee River and the Pea River formed the Choctawhatchee – Pea River Improvement Association. In December 1989, the association filed a petition for the creation of a conservancy district in accordance with the provisions of the Soil and Water Conservation Committee and the Watershed Conservancy Districts Law of Alabama. In May 1991, the Alabama State Legislature passed a law (Act No. 91-602) authorizing the establishment of watershed management authorities with the intent of protecting and managing the watersheds of the state. In September 1991, the Choctawhatchee – Pea Rivers Watershed Management Authority became the first watershed management authority created under this law. In January 1997, the Joint Board of Supervisors of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts approved the inclusion of the Alabama portion of the Yellow River watershed under the management of the agency and the agency became known as the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority.

## **Agency Organization**

The work of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority (hereafter referred to as the authority) is governed by a board of directors composed of sixteen (16) volunteer directors representing the ten counties within the watershed boundaries (one resident director from each county and six at-large directors). All directors are appointed by the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors and serve four-year terms. Directors serve without compensation. The board of directors annually elects from its membership a chairman, vice- chairman, secretary, and treasurer. The terms of office are for one year or until a successor is elected. A majority of the board of directors constitutes a quorum for conducting business. The authority may hire employees necessary to fulfill the duties of the agency. Currently, the authority has four staff members (an executive director, an executive assistant, a flood warning system specialist, and a watershed facilitator). An organization chart is attached.

## Agency Function and Subfunctions

The mandated function of the authority is to develop and execute plans and programs relating to water resource management for citizens within the river basin to ensure water resources are wisely developed, properly used and enhanced for present and future generations. It is one of the agencies responsible for performing the stewardship function of Alabama government.

In the performance of its mandated function, the authority may engage in the following subfunctions.

- **Coordinating Water Resource Management.** The authority manages the water resources of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers basins. The Alabama portion of the river basins includes approximately 2.3 million acres and covers all or a portion of the counties of Barbour, Bullock, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Henry, Houston, Geneva, and Pike.

The authority is authorized by statutes to develop and execute plans and programs relating to the conservation of water, water usage, flood prevention, flood control, wildlife habitat protection, agricultural and timberland protection, erosion prevention, and control of flood water and sediment damages. In addition, the authority may engage in the following activities: (1) acquire, by purchase, gift, grant, bequest or advise, or through condemnation proceedings, lands or rights-of-way necessary for the exercise of any authorized function; (2) construct, improve, operate, and maintain structures and projects as may be necessary for the exercise of any authorized function; (3) borrow such money as is necessary for the purpose of acquiring rights-of-way and establishing, constructing, reconstructing, repairing, enlarging, and maintaining such structures and improvements; (4) sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any of its property or interests; (5) enter into cooperative ventures with local, state, or federal agencies; and (5) cooperate with other watershed management authorities.

The authority may also engage in various cooperative projects with other federal, state, or local government entities. For example, a Flood Warning System (FWS) was designed and installed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in southeast Alabama in 1993 to provide flood warnings to people residing in the area. The authority is responsible for operating and maintaining all components of the FWS to ensure that the system is fully capable of identifying and forecasting potential flood conditions. The FWS gauges sites along or near rivers/streams in river basins, monitors rainfall amounts and stream levels or depths; and sends the information along with stream flow data to local emergency management officials and the National Weather Service.

The Alabama Clean Water Partnership (ACWP) is another on-going cooperative project of different agencies/groups working together to protect and preserve water resources and aquatic ecosystems in the state. The Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Clean Water Partnership, one of the ten basin organizations in the ACWP, was established in 2003 by ACWP to foster, coordinate, and encourage communication throughout Alabama

and provide guidance in prioritization of resources. The authority currently hires a contract staff member to act as the watershed facilitator for this project.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the agency's work includes general administrative, financial, and personnel activities performed to support the programmatic areas of the agency.

**Managing the Agency:** Activities include internal office management work common to most government agencies such as corresponding and communicating; scheduling; meeting; documenting policy and procedures; reporting; litigating; drafting, promoting, or tracking legislation; publicizing and providing information; managing records; and managing information systems and technology.

**Managing Finances:** Activities involved in managing finances may include the following: budgeting (preparing and reviewing the budget package, submitting the budget package to the Department of Finance, and documenting amendments and performance of the budget); purchasing (requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accountings for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; and assisting in the audit process.

**Managing Human Resources:** Activities involved in managing human resources may include the following: recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill vacant positions within the agency; providing compensation and benefits to employees; supervising employees (evaluating performance, disciplining, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave); and providing training and continuing education for employees.

**Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources:** Activities involved in managing properties, facilities, and resources may include the following: inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing for security and/or insurance for property; and assigning, inspecting, and maintaining agency property, including vehicles.

# **Record Keeping System and Records Appraisal of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority**

## **Agency Record Keeping System**

The Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority operates a hybrid system composed of paper and electronic records.

The Flood Warning System (FWS) is a computer-based system that utilizes radio transmitted rainfall and river level data from 17 gauges to three host computers located in New Brockton, Elba, and Geneva, Alabama. The data is stored on hard drives and a monthly backup of the data files is saved on a jump drive. The New Brockton computer also builds two additional files which contain rainfall and river levels. Data is also saved on the agency's website and at the National Weather Service in Tallahassee, FL. The data is sent over the internet to a State of Alabama server in Montgomery and a National Weather Service server in Tallahassee, FL. The files are sent every 30 minutes from the base computer in New Brockton.

## **Records Appraisal**

The following is a discussion of the two major categories of records created and/or maintained by the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority: Temporary Records and Permanent Records.

**I. Temporary Records.** Temporary records should be held for what is considered their active life and be disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met.

- **Project Working Files (Applications, Financial Documents, Correspondence, and Related Materials).** The authority funds a limited number of small projects every year to target one or more of its primary management elements: water quantity, water quality, flood control, and education. All applications are reviewed by one of the authority's internal committees for final decision. This series may contain completed applications, correspondence, agreements, memos, financial documents, and other related materials. Since project final narrative reports are preserved as permanent documentation, this series should be maintained long enough for audit requirements.

**II. Permanent Records.** The Government Records Division recommends the following records as permanent.

## **Coordinating Water Resource Management**

- **Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Packets of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority.** The board of directors of the authority is

obligated, under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 9-10A-12(e), to “provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all proceedings and of all resolutions, regulations and orders issued or adopted.” This series constitutes the core documentation of the activities of the authority’s board of directors. **(Bibliographic Title: Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Packets of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority)**

- **Program Plans.** In accordance with the Code of Alabama 1975 § 9-10A-3, the authority was created for the purpose of developing and executing plans and programs relating to any phase of conservation of water, water usage, flood prevention, flood control, water pollution control, wildlife habitat protection, agricultural and timberland protection, erosion prevention and control of erosion, and flood-water and sediment damages. This series consists of planning documents, developed either by the authority alone or jointly with other entities/individuals, to outline goals, objectives, and priorities for various programs. They may include, but are not limited to, strategic planning documents, flood warning preparedness plan, watershed management plan, annual authority work plans, and other related materials. **(Bibliographic Title: Program Plans)**
- **Project Final Reports.** The authority funds various projects/studies every year to identify or address, among other things, water quantity/quality, flood control, and education needs. Final reports of the studies or projects should be preserved for reference and research needs. **(Bibliographic Title: Project Final Reports)**
- **Publications.** The authority issues newsletters (News from the CPYRWMA), press releases, and other related materials to communicate with the public and other entities. **(Bibliographic Title: Publications)**

## **Administering Internal Operations**

- **Website.** The authority has a website at: [www.cpyrwma.alabama.gov](http://www.cpyrwma.alabama.gov). Subject categories on the web include history, map of watersheds, board of directors, board meeting schedules, projects approved for the current year, and various program descriptions. In addition, the website contains current and historical data for rainfall and river levels along the river basins. The website should be preserved as it serves as an important medium for communication with the public. **(Bibliographic Title: Website)**
- **Inventory Lists.** The Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-16-8[1] requires that “... All [state agency] property managers shall keep at all times in their files a copy of all inventories submitted to the Property Inventory Control Division, and the copies shall be subject to examination by any and all state auditors or employees of the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts.” These files need to be maintained in the agency’s office.

# **Permanent Records List Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority**

## **Coordinating Water Resource Management**

1. Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Packets of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority
2. Program Plans
3. Project Final Reports
4. Publications

## **Administering Internal Operations:**

1. Website
2. Inventory Lists\*

\*Indicates records that ADAH anticipates will remain in the care and custody of the creating agency.

ADAH staff members are available to work with agency staff in determining the best location and storage conditions for the long-term care and maintenance of permanent records.

# **Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority Records Disposition Authority**

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the State Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-5 and § 41-13-20 through 21. It was compiled by the Government Records Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the commission's staff in cooperation with representatives of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority in carrying out its mandated functions and activities. It establishes retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and made available to members of the public. Records must also be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-12-2, § 36-12-4, and § 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334) 242-4452.

## **Explanation of Records Requirements**

- This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules governing the retention of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority's records. Copies of superseded schedules are no longer valid and may not be used for records disposition.
- The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records listed below, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept. Electronic mail, for example, is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.
- Some temporary records listed under the Administering Internal Operations subfunction of this RDA represent duplicate copies of records listed for long-term or permanent retention in the RDAs of other agencies.
- Certain other short-term records that do not materially document the work of an agency may be disposed of under this RDA. Such materials include: (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; and (2) transitory records, which are temporary records created for internal purposes that may include, but are not limited to, telephone call-back messages; drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value; copies of

material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future business; and internal communications about social activities. They may be disposed of without documentation of destruction. Other items that maybe disposed of without destruction documentation include: (1) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document government activities; and (2) stocks of blank stationery, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete.

## **Records Disposition Requirements**

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority and lists the groups of records created and/or maintained by the agency as a result of activities and transactions performed in carrying out these subfunctions. The agency may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements to the State Records Commission for consideration at its regular quarterly meetings.

*\*\* denotes agency vital records, defined as records required to carry on its essential operations, to protect its legal and financial interests, and to assist in its recovery during a period of emergency or natural disaster.*

### **Coordinating Water Resource Management**

#### **MEETING AGENDAS, MINUTES, AND PACKETS OF THE CHOCTAWHATCHEE, PEA AND YELLOW RIVERS WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY\*\***

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### **PROGRAM PLANS\*\***

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### **PROJECT FINAL REPORTS\*\***

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### **Project Working Files (Applications, Financial Documents, Correspondence, and Related Materials)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### **Board of Directors Appointment Files\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the term is expired.

#### **Internal Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Recordings of Meetings**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the official minutes are adopted and signed.

**Monthly Flood Water System (FWS) Activity Reports\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Monthly Flood Water System (FWS) Rainfall Reports\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Monthly Clean Water Partnership Activity Reports Submitted by the Watershed Facilitator to the Authority**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Quarterly Clean Water Partnership Activity Reports Submitted by the Authority to the Alabama Clean Water Partnership (ACWP)\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency****WEBSITE**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. PRESERVE A COMPLETE COPY OF WEBSITE ANNUALLY OR AS OFTEN AS SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ARE MADE.

**Newspaper Clippings**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**Routine Correspondence**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Administrative Reference Files\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**Records documenting the implementation of the agency's approved RDA (copies of transmittal forms to Archives or the State Records Center, evidence of obsolete records destroyed, and annual reports to the State Records Commission)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Copy of RDA**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the RDA is superseded.

**System documentation (hardware/software manuals and diskettes, warranties)\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain documentation of former system 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the former hardware and software no longer exists anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to a new system.

**Printouts of Acknowledgment from the Secretary of State Relating to Notices of Meetings Posted by State Agencies**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances**

**Records documenting the preparation of a budget request package and reporting of the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records of original entry or routine accounting transactions such as journals, registers, and ledgers; and records of funds deposited outside the state treasury, including bank statements, deposit slips, and cancelled checks\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Contractual records established for the purpose of services or personal property\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration of the contract.

**Agency Audit Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting the bid process, including requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the bids were opened.

**Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources**

**Records documenting payroll (e.g. pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting payroll deduction authorizations**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting payroll deductions for tax purposes**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records documenting employee hours worked, leave earned and leave taken**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Records of employee final leave status**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee from the agency.

**Records documenting an employee's work history - generally maintained as a case file**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of an employee from the agency.

**Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Files\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources****INVENTORY LISTS\*\***

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Retain in Office. (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-16- 8[1]).

**Letters of Transmittal**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Agency Copies of Transfer of State Property Forms (SD-1)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Property Inventory Cards and/or Computer Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Receipts of Responsibility for Property\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until return of item to property manager.

**Real Property Leasing Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after termination of lease.

**Records documenting the use, maintenance, ownership, insurance, and disposition of vehicles owned by the agency\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the vehicle is removed from the property inventory.

**Records documenting the use, maintenance, ownership, insurance, and disposition of equipment owned by the agency\*\***

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the equipment is removed from the property inventory.

## **Requirement and Recommendations for Implementing the Records Disposition Authority (RDA)**

Under the Code of Alabama 1975, § 41-13-21, “no state officer or agency head shall cause any state record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining approval of the State Records Commission.” This Records Disposition Authority constitutes authorization by the State Records Commission for the disposition of the records of the Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers Watershed Management Authority (hereafter referred to as the agency) as stipulated in this document.

One condition of this authorization is that the agency submit an annual Records Disposition Authority (RDA) Implementation Report on agency records management activities, including documentation of records destruction, to the State Records Commission in October of each year. In addition, the agency should make every effort to establish and maintain a quality record-keeping program through the following activities:

- The agency should designate a records liaison, who is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the agency, coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, and ensuring the regular implementation of the agency’s approved RDA.
- Permanent records in the agency’s custody should be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.
- Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis – for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA’s provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the state Sunset Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.
- The agency should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records’ permanent preservation and accessibility.
- Electronic mail contains permanent, temporary, or transitory record information. Although e-mail records can be printed out, filed, and retained according to the RDA’s requirements, the division should preferably employ an electronic records management system capable of sorting e-mail into folders and archiving messages having long-term value.

- The staff of the State Records Commission or the Examiners of Public Accounts may examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the agency and inspect records destruction documentation. Government Records Division archivists are available to instruct the agency staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the agency in implementing its records management program.

The State Records Commission adopted this records disposition authority on November 5, 2008.

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Edwin C. Bridges, Chairman, by Tracey Berezansky  
State Records Commission

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Date

Receipt acknowledged:

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Barbara P. Gibson, Executive Director  
Choctawhatchee, Pea and Yellow Rivers  
Watershed Management Authority

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Date